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CBS MORNING NEWS CBS TV

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CIA 3.01.6

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CIA/01 Colby, Wm.

Intelligence Committees; Mail Opening

MORTON: The House Intelligence Committee meets today to discuss Henry KISSINGER's refusal to give it a memo on U.S. handling of the Cyprus crisis.

And the Senate committee begins public hearings on the CIA's practice of reading mail to and from Americans abroad. Daniel Schorr reports.

DANIEL SCHORR: When the FBI in 1958 got the idea of reading mail from Russia, it ran into the CIA which had been doing it for six years. The CIA owned up and cut the FBI in on the operation. When the CIA finally got around in 1961 to telling a Postmaster General what it was doing in the Post Office, J. Edward DAY, a KENNEDY appointee, was quoted as saying that it was okay to continue but he didn't want to know details. When the CIA's Inspector General in 1960 found out what was going on, he didn't react with horror but recommended getting a cover story ready in case the project was blown. Later it was decided no cover story could cover an outright criminal offense. And so it was suggested that they have a scapegoat ready to blame for tampering with the mails.

The ROCKEFELLER Commission has plowed through this ground, but for the next three days the Senate Intelligence Committee wants to do it in public with live principals, from ex-CIA Director Richard HELMS to ex-Postmasters General DAY and John GRONOUSKI. It promises some new disclosures. And anyway it's something to do while the committee haggles with the White House about how to hold public hearings on super secret electronic surveillance, a subject that was censored out of the ROCKEFELLER report. Daniel Schorr, CBS News, Washington.

HUGHES RUDD: CIA Director William COLBY was in New York City last night for a speech to the Navy League. And he took out after congressional investigations of the intelligence community, saying they're intended to amuse or even amaze the public.

CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM COLBY: We are about to have our fifth rerun of the great mail reading story. It first appeared in my testimony before CIA's oversight committees last January and February. I said that we had reviewed

and terminated this activity in 1973. It's second playing was in the ROCKEFELLER Commission report. This was followed by a tv spectacular featuring Mrs. ABZUG's indignation. The Post Office and Civil Service Commission of the House of Representatives then reviewed it. And this week the Senate Select Committee will repeat the performance in greater detail on live tv.

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